

Toolik Field Station Snowmachine Use Guidelines

Toolik Field Station (TFS) operates and maintains a small fleet of snow machines. These machines are available for use by TFS scientists under the appropriate BLM and Alaska DNR permits and through scheduling with TFS staff, as explained below. Station staff also use the snowmobiles on the permit area (gravel pad) for maintenance support functions and off pad for Search & Rescue and science support.

Permits

All snowmachine use in the Dalton Highway Corridor (within five miles of the Dalton Highway) requires a permit from either the BLM or Alaska Department of Natural Resources, or both. It is the sole responsibility of the science user to acquire and possess the appropriate permits for their snowmachine use. Permits can be obtained from the proper land owner, either BLM or Alaska DNR. The minimum condition for any use of snow machines off the pad is six inches of snow on ground that is frozen. Snowmachiners must abide ALL additional stipulations of their specific permits. The only snowmachine use covered by any “TFS blanket snowmachine permit” is use within the TFS lease boundary (the gravel pad) and on navigable waters of Toolik Lake. TFS requires copies of permits before allowing snowmachine travel from the station.

Safety and Training

Proper preparation and training is essential for safely operating snowmachines in arctic conditions around TFS. Station staff will give researchers an orientation on environmental conditions specific to the area around TFS as well as operating protocols of TFS machines. This, however, is NOT a substitute for proper snowmachine and winter training. Training, preparation, and safe operation of snow machines are the responsibilities of each individual and each project, who must come prepared for work in the Arctic. TFS operates under the *Toolik Field Station Extreme Winter Weather Guidelines*. All winter TFS users must consult these guidelines.

Project-owned Snowmachines

Science users may bring their own project snowmachines to TFS. No maintenance or support for these machines is guaranteed at TFS other than fueling and general maintenance advice. Projects that plan to use their own snowmachines based out of TFS should contact the Station Manager in advance, preferably at the time of their reservation, and communicate their intentions for where they intend to go and for how long.

Toolik Field Station Maintained Snowmachines

The small TFS fleet of snowmachines is available to researchers with the proper permits on a reserved basis. The snowmachines at TFS are ageing, but are maintained in top working order. They are small utility machines, best suited for limited local use. They can pull a maximum of 100 pounds.

Contact the on-site manager to request use of TFS snowmachine. If extensive use is expected (i.e., more than one day of use or critical use on a specific day or time) the station manager should be contacted at the time of making your station reservation to check the availability of the machines. All users of TFS snowmachines will receive an orientation on the operational characteristics of the TFS machines, as well as the environmental characteristics around TFS.

Use of TFS snowmachines is limited to five miles from your starting point within the Toolik Research Natural Area. Use may further be limited by snow and ice conditions, visibility conditions, maintenance issues, group size, and operator experience.

If easier access is afforded to research sites by trailering snowmachines to an alternate starting location, a snowmachine trailer may be available for use. Contact the station manager for availability. TFS also has a limited supply of helmets. It is recommended that you bring your own if you want to be guaranteed a helmet.

Up to four tow-behind utility sleds are also available with reservations – contact the TFS manager.

Procedures for Snowmachine Use Based out of Toolik Field Station

Snowmachine use based from TFS falls into two policy categories: Local Use and Extended Use.

Local Use

Defined: Use within one mile or easy sight distance of TFS (as determined by the on-site manager); operators can easily walk back to camp if they get stuck.

Local use of snowmachines at TFS is treated much like other local TFS field work. If using TFS machines users must first get machines assigned by the on-site manager. Users then get an orientation on the operation procedure of the TFS machines, as well as environmental conditions around TFS. Any other stipulations of use will also be addressed at this time. Once these procedures are completed, when going into the field users must verbally notify the on-site manager of their departure and sign out on the sign-out board. The board is located in Winter Quarters in the winter and in the Dining Hall in the spring. Users must sign back in on the board when returning to camp.

Extended Use

Defined: Use extending beyond one mile or easy sight distance from TFS (as determined by the on-site manager)

Extended use of snowmachines at TFS requires more involved procedures. Users requesting to use TFS machines for extended use, as well as users using their own machines based out of TFS, must first complete the *Toolik Field Station Extended Snowmachine Use Form* (ESUF) (attached below) and submit it to the on-site manager. The manager will then review the proposed trip plans and communicate any stipulations (if using TFS machines) on use. These stipulations may include mileage and geographic limits due to snow and ice conditions, light conditions, maintenance issues, group size, and operator experience.

The on-site manager must be told before each trip is made, and the sign-out board must be completed on both departure and arrival back to camp.

Other requirements for extended snowmachine use

1. Mandatory to carry satellite phone and TFS contact numbers (Can be checked out at TFS)
2. Mandatory to carry a GPS (Can be checked out at TFS)

Toolik Field Station Extended Snowmachine Use Form

Project Name _____

Principal Investigator _____

Dates of Snowmachine Use _____

Snowmachine Group Information

Name	Snowmachine Experience/Training	Winter Experience/Training
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Do you intend to use TFS snowmachines? Y/N

Do you request the use of any other equipment? Sleds, Helmets, Trailer...?

What types of work will you doing? What type of Equipment will be handling? Will you be pulling a sled?

Describe your route/destination (be specific)
